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Recital: Opera Workshop

Opera Workshop

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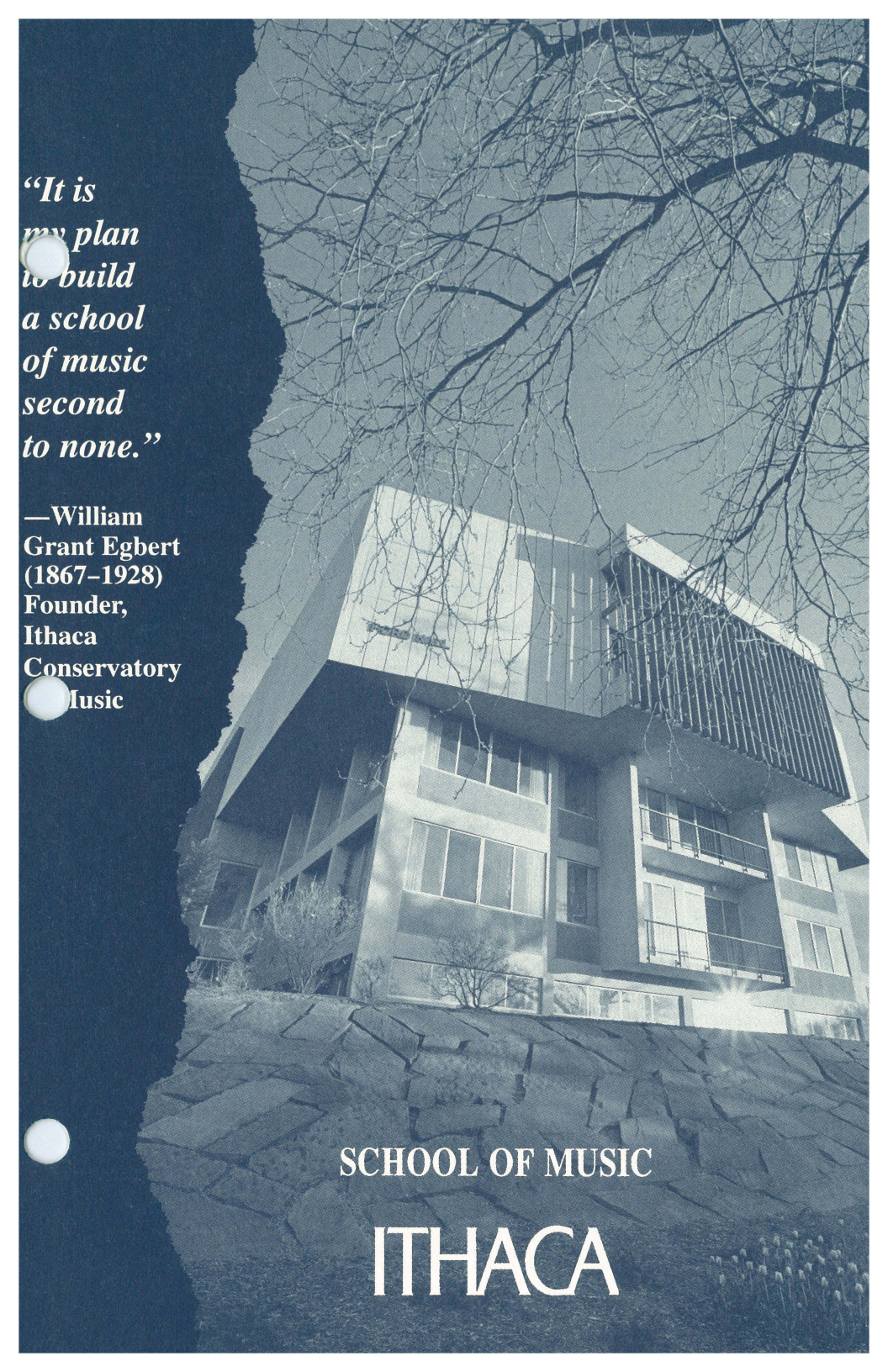
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*“It is
my plan
to build
a school
of music
second
to none.”*

—William
Grant Egbert
(1867–1928)
Founder,
Ithaca
Conservatory
Music

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Opera Workshop Spring 2002

"Scenes in Central Park"

Patrick Hansen, stage and music director

Cayenna Ponchione, graduate conductor

Lisa Yoo, pianist

Mae Beatty, assistant director

Strawberry Fields, 1999

Libretto by A. R. Gurney

Music by Michael Torke

Adeline

Elisa Sciscioli

Student

Sean R. Clark

Workman

James Roumeles, Jr.

Son

Christopher Martin

Adeline, an elderly woman arrives in Central Park. She is at the "Strawberry Fields" John Lennon memorial park, but thinks she is at the Metropolitan Opera. She maintains this idea throughout. Everyone she sees and meets, with the exception of her son (and later her daughter) are, in her mind, either opera singers performing in an opera, or audience members taking their seats on park benches.

Partenope (sung in Italian), 1730

Libretto by Silvio Stampiglia

Music by G. F. Handel

Partenope

Meagan Johnson

Arsace

Bruce Warren

Rosmira

Adele Betz

Armindo

Mae Beatty

Emillio

Scott England

Ormonte

James Roumeles, Jr.

Partenope does not know whom to love: she is attracted to Arsace and Emilio physically, but is perhaps more inclined to love the young man Armindo with her heart and soul. Arsace does not know whom to love: he is attracted to Partenope, but still cares for and - perhaps - still loves Rosmira. Rosmira has arrived disguised as a young man to seek out her ex-fiance Arsace. Emilio, being spurned by Partenope, decides to

Directors notes

This summer I will be returning to Glimmerglass Opera as the Director of the Young American Artists Program. This scenes program is an *hommage* to Glimmerglass Opera: derived from their repertoire of the past five summers and a nod to the aesthetic of looking past the traditional to the innovative. Opera must change and grow to continue to live - both from a repertoire and staging perspective.

With this in mind, the evening's scenes are not presented in isolation from each other. On the contrary, each one is informed by the other, interlaced, and connected. The device of using the "bookend" - **Strawberry Fields** - works quite well: an elderly woman, Adeline arrives in Central Park (Strawberry Fields to be exact) thinking she is at the Metropolitan Opera getting set to see an afternoon matinee of some opera. The scenes that follow are, in her mind, Met operatic presentations. I have staged these scenes to be a part of the Central Park milieu - real people in New York City living in present day. All of the scenes take place in Strawberry Fields - a wonderful area to IMAGINE.

The theme of the scenes program is essentially Connection and Disconnection. Adeline is severely disconnected from reality but is desperately trying to connect to her surroundings through artistic means: the people she sees falling in and out of love during **Partenope** are, for her, not real Italians being passionate about their sex lives, they are opera singers in the middle of a Handel opera; the married ladies talking about the scandal of being pursued by the same man are obviously performing the opening of the second scene from **Falstaff**; the group of immigrants talking about and licking their ice cream cones are not just in the park enjoying dessert, they are singing the exceptional sextet from **Street Scene**.

Then things begin to get very confusing for her - after nodding off just before the climax of the Weil, Adeline is connected to her past: her three sisters, long dead, come for a visit. Or is Adeline strangely caught up in a performance of the final quartet from Adamo's **Little Women** singing the part of Jo herself? Is she Jo? Are these her sisters, or are they other ghosts from her past?

Now the connection between reality and fiction becomes completely blurred in Adeline's mind. She meets another woman who is also desperate to connect to the world of compassion but finds herself disconnected in a world that does not care if she and her baby live or

die. McNally's and Beaser's **Food of Love** is a parable: what would happen if a new savior arrived in this world as the baby of a New York City homeless woman? Would anyone take notice? Or care at all? All babies carry the potential to be the next Gandhi, the next Mozart; they all have the ability to save the world - but do we want to be saved?

At the end of this day in Central Park, Adeline's son and daughter show up to disconnect her from New York City and move her to a "home". She won't leave until "we get to the end" of the opera. All of the people - or are they opera characters? - take part in the final moment of Adeline's opera. She gets to the end and finds it is just a beginning.

In the original presentation, **Strawberry Fields** preceded **The Food of Love**. I thought it was important to follow the homeless Woman's character to the end of her story as well.

Glimmerglass Opera presented the world premiere of **Strawberry Fields** and **The Food of Love** as part of the "Central Park" trilogy of one-acts in July of 1999. "Central Park" was telecast by the PBS Great Performances series and was nominated for an Emmy award (losing out to a Bocelli special!). The three operas were subsequently produced at New York City Opera. Mark Adamo's **Little Women** has really taken the opera world by storm. After its debut with the Houston Grand Opera just a few years ago, it has been produced by almost a dozen opera companies in America since then. Glimmerglass will add this piece to its repertoire this summer. **Falstaff** and **Partenope** were presented in the summer of 1998, both in fabulously successful productions. The "Ice Cream Sextet" from Weil's **Street Scene** has been a favorite excerpt for the Glimmerglass Young Artists to present in community outreach concerts - it would be nice if this great opera appeared on the Glimmerglass stage someday!

wage war on her and her suitors. Ormonte, man of mystery, watches with an alarming sense of how it all will end.

Falstaff, 1893

Libretto by Arrigo Boito
Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Alice
Meg
Nannetta
Quickly

Liz Davis
Megan Kohler
Julie Bickford
Ivy Gaibel

Two married ladies, Alice and Meg, receive love letters from John Falstaff - the exact same letter! Discovering this, they plot their revenge on him with their friend Quickly, and Alice's daughter Nanetta.

Street Scene, 1947

Libretto by Langston Hughes
Music by Kurt Weil

Lippo
Mrs. F.
Mrs. O.
Henry
Jones
Olsen

J. Thomas C. Morris
Marika Beals
Kimberly Burns
Erik Butzek
Peter Bush
Michael Nyby

On a beautiful autumn day in New York City, six immigrants enjoy some ice cream.

Little Women, 2000

Libretto and Music by Mark Adamo

Amy
Beth
Meg
Jo

Amanda Capone
Rebecca Minor
Megan Meister
Elisa Sciscioli

Jo imagines that her other sisters are with her. They remember their youth and their struggles together.

The Food of Love, 1999

Libretto by Terrence McNally
Music by Robert Beaser

A Painter	Michael Nyby
A Woman	Sonia Rodriguez Bermejo
Roy	Scott England
Linda	Amanda Zawadzki
Elderly Man	Bruce Warren
Elderly Woman	Beth Burrier-Bradstreet

A homeless, nameless Woman appears in Central Park. Looking for food, money or shelter for her baby, she encounters various New Yorkers: a painter lost in his futile attempt to create art; two self-absorbed professionals seeking the sun; and a very emotionally damaged elderly couple trying to cope with their own personal loss.

Strawberry Fields, 1999

Libretto by A. R. Gurney
Music by Michael Torke

Adeline	Elisa Sciscioli
Student	Sean R. Clark
Son	Christopher Martin
Daughter	Kristen Robinson
Nurse	Maria Rondinaro
Chorus	Members of Opera Workshop

The beautiful autumn day is winding to a close. The son returns with Adeline's nurse as the daughter appears - miffed at having been called out of her fitting at Bergdorf's. The student and the others discuss what should be done with Adeline. Adeline herself is quite caught up in the opera going on in her mind and decides to join it.

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Friday, April 19, 2002
8:15 p.m.